

NEWSLETTER

LEA ROBACK FOUNDATION



Number 12, December 2015



A Word from the President



A mission still worth pursuing, an exercise that is still justified.

Since the moment that the Foundation was created, there's no doubt that women have been making progress on the educational front. Today, they are a majority in almost every university faculty at the Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral levels. Their academic results are overall better than those achieved by their male counterparts. Their drop rate is likewise lower.

A few months ago, the Fédération autonome de l'éducation (FAE), released a research study that shed some new light on the educational successes that women are achieving.

Obviously, the link between poverty and dropping out of school is undeniably strong. Difficulties in school are not something that only girls experience, but when combined with a lack of parental support, this kind of challenge turns out to be more critical for them than for boys. It also appears that girls are more affected by psychological factors or family problems than boys are. These personal factors, which are internalized most of the time by girls, more often than not go unnoticed in the school milieu and are rarely taken into account when measures to prevent dropping out of school are taken. Amongst other things, one notes that girls are twice as likely to suffer from problems of depression and that this problem remains largely underestimated.

Dropping out of school has a huge impact upon the economic, family and conjugal situation of dropouts, as well as upon their social and personal life. In the job market, they are often limited to contingent employment, and less well paid jobs. This reality affects both boys and girls, but the economic consequences strike the latter more intensely. Data from the Institut de la statistique du Québec reveals that women without a DCS will earn \$16,414 annually, compared to \$24,434 for men in the same situation.

Once they're in the job market, female dropouts thus earn only 67% of the salary earned by their male counterparts. For the same reference year, namely 2008, the low income cut-off point was set at \$22,700 for a person living alone; accordingly, men without a DCS just barely escape the official poverty line, while women find themselves below it.

For women, having children represents both a motivation as well as an obstacle to trying to go back to school. This is essentially explained by the fact that the responsibility for the care and education of children still more often than not falls upon the shoulders of women. Hence, this reality favours a return to the classroom for boys aged 19 to 24 years old, but tends to hinder girls of the same age from doing the same.

The importance of schooling for girls is recognized by the Ministry of Education. Indeed, when establishing its deprivation index, the Ministry recognized two major variables that they weight differently: the years of schooling (or lack of years of schooling) of mothers and the inactivity of parents. Seeing as poverty is a predominant factor with regard to school drop-outs, the fight against female drop-outs, in addition to contributing to the well-being of girls and de facto gender equality, could also prove to be a most promising path for encouraging all children across the Province of Quebec to remain in school.

As we can thus observe, the Foundation's mission, which works in favour of women's right to and access to education, is still very much worth pursuing. Awarding scholarships to girls and women from socio-economically disadvantaged milieus is likewise an exercise that is still justified.

Lorraine Pagé



**WE WISH YOU
ALL THE BEST
FOR THIS
NEW YEAR**

2016



2015 - 2016 Scholarship Recipients



It gives us great pride, we the members of the Board of Directors of the Lea Roback Foundation, to grant **14 scholarships** this year to 14 women who stand out thanks to their resilience, their tenacity and their social commitment.

As we introduce these scholarship recipients to you, we wish to pay tribute to them and to salute the example they set for us all.

Each one of these women is working courageously to build a better world for herself, for her children and for the society in which she lives.

We admire them and we sincerely congratulate them.

Literacy

Annik Ritchie hopes to continue attending literacy workshops full-time in order to proficiently master her reading, writing and mathematics skills.

She has been going to the *Maison des mots* for a few years now and affirms that she's made "great progress" in every sphere of her social and private life.

At 38 years old, Annik is well-positioned to ascertain just how much her new skills are helping her to overcome her shyness, better express herself and take her rightful place in society; she likes the privilege of making new friends.

For the past two and a half years, she has been volunteering in a daycare centre, where she cleans the toys so that they're always impeccable for the little ones. According to the Director, she does her job conscientiously, is respectful towards others and shows great dedication and team spirit. Proud of the progress she's making, she is actively involved in the provincial literacy coalition.

« Nous sommes très, très heureux que la candidature de Mme Annik Ritchie ait été retenue ... Elle le mérite bien. C'est une personne très dévouée et bien impliquée dans la communauté » ..

*Ilham Gaudreau, coordonnatrice
La Maison des mots des Basses-Laurentides*

High School - General Training



Tonya Latoya Isaac received a scholarship from the Lea Roback Foundation in 2013.

A mother of two children, who shares their custody with her spouse, and working on a temporary basis, she thus has to marry her family responsibilities, social commitment and success in school. This young woman demonstrates profound consistency in her commitments and career ambitions; she is still pursuing her goal, namely, to complete her studies in radiology, in order to become a technician in a hospital for children.

Tonya wants to become an example for young women in her community and for women who have to deal with the challenges and dilemmas faced by any young mother who is a student. A hard-working and determined student, she has been volunteering for several years now in DESTA's activities, most notably in the "Lead the Ship" program. Receiving a scholarship will alleviate some major financial concerns for Tonya and enable her to better concentrate her time and energy on succeeding in school.

Febronia Niyongere, a mother of four children, really needs gainful employment to help her spouse pay for their home and to contribute to the costs of raising a family. This is why she is working diligently to finish high school. She would like to quickly do a personal care vocational diploma, so that she could then work in a health care establishment.

Febronia is a young woman who has been volunteering since 2004 in numerous organizations in Sherbrooke, Montreal and Terrebonne, where she now lives. Everywhere, her joyful demeanour is much appreciated, as well as her charisma and capacity to get the job done. In everything she does, she demonstrates that her underlying motivation is to "help others and to be involved professionally in her community."

Vocational High School

Roxanne Tailleux has always been intrigued by machinery and things mechanical. Back on the school benches after an 8-year hiatus, Roxanne undertook an orientation and exploration exercise in order to judiciously choose a trade. Convinced that she has "the personality to do this kind of job," she is confidently undertaking what is necessary to learn a nontraditional trade for woman, aware that in so doing, she will be helping to break down barriers.

Enrolled in a stationary engineering vocation diploma program, she is hoping to study full-time, so that she can get into the job market as soon as possible.

A mother of three children, she doesn't have any time to lose. So Roxanne is continuing her studies with determination, is involved in the *Association des locataires Saint-Pie X*, in Quebec City, and provides her children with the assistance and attention necessary for their development and self-realization.

Lorraine Vaillancourt has two autonomous adult children and a 13-year old daughter who lives with her. Her income is very modest and doesn't leave much room for providing the latter with any indulgences.

Lorraine Vaillancourt wants to wrest back more control over her life; she thus has to complete her studies. She is getting support in this endeavour from the *Centre-Femmes de Bellechasse* and a street worker at the MRC Bellechasse.

Training as an orderly would enable her to do a job that she likes and to be more effective in caring for senior citizens or disabled people. This training could open doors for her in terms of full-time work, which is very important to her. Lorraine Vaillancourt is very active and very motivated to do what is necessary to improve her life and that of her daughter.

CEGEP - technical training

Akouyo Mansanh Badohoun, a permanent resident and single-parent mother of three children, has a mathematics diploma from the University of Lomé-Togo. Her diplomas, that she earned in her country of origin, are not recognized in Quebec; so she has to update her education and find a trade that will enable her to earn a living and fulfil her determination to make a “practical contribution” to her host country. Her interests and sense of the reality around her are driving her to opt for nursing. Akouyo has great strength of character, and is already studying full-time and is very engaged in supporting refugee and immigrant families in the Eastern Townships, amongst other roles, as a volunteer in homework assistance programs.

Julie Boyd is not one to give up in the face of adversity. She herself, brought up in a single-parent very low-income household, is a leukemia survivor and mother with the sole custody of a six-year old child. This courageous woman wants to give herself a better future and prepare her son to enjoy a better life. Armed with volunteer experience in kitchen workshops and in organizing collective kitchens, she has chosen to pursue her studies in dietetics and to earn the credits needed for a Bachelor of Nutrition. Her goal: to become a healthy eating consultant, particularly vis-à-vis vulnerable populations. No doubt her determination will help her achieve her goals.

«Une fois de plus je vous remercie et je compte faire bon usage de ce don que vous m'avez généreusement offert».

Tatiana Christelle Kamtchoum Tiemeni



Tatiana Christelle Kamtchoum

Tiemeni arrived in Canada in 2014 with her spouse, who likewise relied upon loans and bursaries to complete his studies. Registered at the Centre d'accueil et d'intégration des immigrants du Bas-Saint-Laurent à Rimouski, and very sensitive to intercultural relations, she has been a conscientious volunteer.

Tatiana has a biochemistry diploma - in nutrition and food safety, from Cameroon, but must redo her studies and choose a new path in life, because her diplomas are not recognized in the Province of Quebec. She is thinking about doing a program in nursing care. Tatiana is very motivated and wishes to embark upon a new working life under the best possible conditions, so that she could work as a nurse and do volunteer work in humanitarian organizations.

Myriam Laporte has two young sons, 3 and 4 years old, for whom she shares custody with their father. Since the birth of her children, Myriam hasn't had any free time to continue doing her prior volunteer work. These days, all her energy is devoted to her children and towards intensive preparations for going back to school.

This young woman has had to support herself on her own since she was 16 years old; she wants to practice a profession that would provide her with a better quality of life. She has thus enrolled in a program on special education techniques. However, she has to deal with one more complication; as a francophone, she has to do the program in English. She thus has to take on two



challenges at the same time, which she is doing, and thereby proving that she has the capacity to do lots of work and achieve success.

Diana Vergas Lopez arrived in the Province of Quebec in 2008 and since then, she has been living at the *Maison Pauline-Bonin* in Joliette with her young son who is 6 years old. Eager and motivated to integrate rapidly into her new surroundings, she learned French and successfully completed her studies in business techniques and management. However, proficiency in English is indispensable to the continuation of her education which, notwithstanding her keen motivation, makes her learning more challenging. To overcome this difficulty and achieve her goal, Diana made up her mind to enrol in an English course at the Institut linguistique provincial. Supported by her mentor, she will use the scholarship that she receives to perfect her English and thereby complete her studies.

Université - baccalauréat



Debjeni Dhar has a commendable ambition: to become one of the first women to complete the new Business Technology Management program at Concordia University. In so doing, this young 19-year old woman wants to leave poverty behind her, help her parents and give them back all that they have done for their children.

Debjeni wishes to be a model for other women in her community, both in terms of her professional success and her social commitment. This sensitive young woman is very receptive and attentive towards others and is very much appreciated for the volunteer work she does in the Bengali community, as well as at the neighbourhood Eco-Centre and at *Project Genesis*, an anti-poverty social action group.

Aliyah-Jade Hunte is a determined young woman who began doing volunteer work at a very young age. She notably participated in the Tyndale St-Georges program and in organizing events such as We Day and Free the Children. Her experience as a volunteer and her studies at Dawson College in the North-South program, convinced her to enrol in sociology. Despite numerous difficult periods in her personal life, she never lost courage and knows how to take advantage of her life experiences to better move forward. Aliyah-Jade believes that her studies in sociology

will help her better understand the world around her and she wants to apply her knowledge to work that will benefit children.

Noémi N'Zafio Bastien, a single-parent mother of three children, spent her childhood and adolescence in various establishments under the aegis of Youth Protection (DPJ). When she decided to finish high school and to find a profession that would enable her to provide for her family and be useful to society learning the lessons from her many life experiences, she was 22 years old and pregnant with her third

«I have seen my parents struggle immensely so that their children can have a better future (...).

Therefore my parents are my main motivation to succeed in life and in school.»

Debjeni Dhar

Je vous remercie pour la foi que vous portez en ma réussite académique ... j'en ferai bénéficier les plus nécessiteux une fois mon diplôme obtenu.

Noémi N'Zafio-Bastien

child. Noémi is enrolled in law school so that one day she can be able to get involved in social projects, such as Juripop, and to work with a clientele who are vulnerable.

At the same time as she takes care of her family and school responsibilities, Noémi finds time to volunteer to help special needs students; she is also a volunteer at Moisson Québec and participates in collective kitchen workshops.

*Je viens de recevoir la lettre et le chèque.
Encore un immense merci à la Fondation
Léa-Roback pour son soutien pendant
trois ans!*

Kabisha Velauthapillai

Kabisha Velauthapillai has already twice been awarded a scholarship from the Lea Roback Foundation. Very committed to different humanitarian programs, such as Canada World Youth, Oxfam Quebec and Desta, she isn't neglecting her studies. Enrolled in the Bachelor of Science program at McGill, she is preparing to continue her studies in medicine. This young woman

is described by her professors and advisors as an exceptional individual, both in terms of her commitment and in her perseverance to overcome the difficulties she faces. Her career choices are guided by her desire to practise medicine in underprivileged milieus and to participate in this fashion in changing society. She will undoubtedly prevail.



The *Pack Light* project, a tribute to Lea Roback



In August 2014, Haley Firkser, Michael Yashinsky and Zoë Freedman made each other's acquaintance at the *Tent: Fashion* event, an activity intended for young adults from the Jewish community in Canada and the United States, and whose theme is the links between fashion and Jewish culture. At the end of this get together, the participants were invited to present their projects to a jury made up of members of the fashion industry. Haley, Michael and Zoë thus elaborated the *Pack Light* project, which won a prize for it to be implemented.

The Pack Light project involves producing a series of bags sporting the image of a personality from the Jewish community and containing objects that propagate the latter's action. Young artists are invited to participate in the design of the bags, with the collaboration of representative of the social mission of the selected personality.

Notwithstanding the geographical distances separating them - Michael works in Detroit, Haley and Zoë are completing their studies, one in Montreal and the other in Halifax -, the project starts to take shape. The first bag is pays tribute to Lea Roback and the young Montreal artist Noa Ne'eman created the visual design which integrates a very beautiful representation of Lea with the logo of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU). The representatives of the Lea Roback Foundation had a lot of pleasure collaborating in this project.

The launch took place last October 3, in Montreal, at the Chez Boris bar, with some 50 people in attendance, including representatives from the Lea Roback Foundation and a few members of Lea's family.

The evening was a very lively one, with music by DJ Noah Bick and delicious Ashkenazi culinary specialities prepared by The Wandering Chew.

For Haley, Michael and Zoë, as well as for the Lea Roback Foundation, this project clearly demonstrates that Lea Roback's action and influence are still very much alive and relevant. The commitment, courage of her opinions, the struggle for a better world represent a moving legacy that people like Lea can still convey to people of every age.



Noa Ne'eman

The bags are on sale for \$20. All the relevant information can be found on the project's Web site at: <http://shlepwithpride.com> or then again by writing to the following e-mail address: packlightbags@gmail.com

2015 Annual Fundraising Campaign

Our annual fundraising campaign has been under way since mid-October. We wish to thank all those people who have already sent in their donation. These contributions are indispensable for us to fulfil the mission of the Lea Roback Foundation.

The support of our Great Partners, Partners, union organizations and all the individuals committed to making our society a better place for everyone is what enables the Foundation, year after year, to award scholarships to women seeking to improve their situation in life. If you have not yet made your donation, here are some of the ways that you might do so.

BECOME A MAJOR PARTNER OR PARTNER

Any organization or person who makes a donation of \$1,000 or more becomes a Major Partner and, for an amount between \$500 and \$1000, becomes a Partner. As for the campaign under way, we would like to draw your attention to the ever-expanding role of women from the education milieu: a gesture of solidarity that underlines the importance of education to achieve a decent standard of living.



CANADA HELPS

It is possible to make your donation online by way of CanadaHelps
<https://www.canadahelps.org/dn/9310>

MONTHLY DONATION

The monthly contribution method is an effective one. It can be cancelled at any time. Using Canada Helps facilitates making the payment.



We invite you to make a bequest, a donation when a loved one departs, or to mark a birthday.

Thank you for your support!



MICHELINE DUMONT, 2015 RECIPIENT OF THE GÉRARD-PARIZEAU AWARD

The Lea Roback Foundation congratulates a loyal donor, Ms. Micheline Dumont, recipient of the Gérard-Parizeau Award, whose mission is to pay tribute to leading experts in the fields of history, economics and management. This Awards seeks to draw attention to the value and original thinking that characterizes the work being done by researchers, professors or people of action. The Foundation is pleased to note this honour given to Micheline Dumont, a historian and distinguished professor at the Université de Sherbrooke, widely recognized for her colossal contribution to research and the propagation of the history of women in the Province of Quebec.

MARTIN DUCKWORTH, 2015 RECIPIENT OF THE GÉRARD-PARIZEAU AWARD

Another loyal donor, Martin Duckworth, has received the Albert-Tessier Award, by the Government of Quebec, part of the Prix du Québec, given to individuals for an outstanding career in Québec cinema. Martin Duckworth is an active director and cinematographer, his contribution to documentary in Quebec and Canada is significant.

*IN SOLIDARITY, CONGRATULATIONS TO MICHELINE DUMONT
AND MARTIN DUCKWORTH!*

Great Partners of the Fondation

The Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux (APTS);
the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ);
the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN);
the Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec (FIQ);
the Sœurs Saint-Joseph de Saint-Hyacinthe;
the Syndicat des conseillères et conseillers de la CSQ, Fonds de solidarité;
Ms Micheline Dumont;
Ms Nicole Ranger
and a donor who wishes to remain anonymous..

Partners of the Fondation

Bâtirente;
the Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins;
the Fédération autonome de l'enseignement (FAE);
the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ);
the Fédération nationale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec (FNEEQ-CSN);
the Organisation des retraité-es de la CSN (OR-CSN);
the Syndicat de l'enseignement de l'Ouest de Montréal;
the Syndicat des professionnelles et des professionnels du milieu de l'éducation de Montréal (CSQ);
Mr Martin Duckworth;
Ms Anna Marie Labelle;
Ms Donna Mergler;
and Ms Lucille Panet-Raymond.

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